United Nations

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean

General Assembly

Official Records • Forty-ninth Session
Supplement No.29 (A/49/29)

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. By its resolution 48/82 of 16 December 1993, the General Assembly, after taking note of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, 1/ requested the Ad Hoc Committee to continue consideration of new alternative approaches building upon its deliberations at the session held in 1993, with a view to reaching early agreement to give new impetus to the process of strengthening cooperation and ensuring peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region, and called upon the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean to participate in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. The Assembly invited Member States to submit to the Secretary-General, by 31 May 1994, their views on new alternative approaches, including those discussed at the 1993 session of the Ad Hoc Committee, contained in its report to the General Assembly and requested the Secretary-General to submit, by 30 June 1994, a report based on replies received from Member States. The Assembly also requested the Ad Hoc Committee to hold a session during 1994, of a duration of not more than five working days, and to submit to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session a comprehensive report on the implementation of the resolution.

2. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/82, the Ad Hoc Committee held its session from 11 to 15 July 1994 (see A/AC.159/SR.431-437) at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Committee held seven formal meetings as well as seven informal meetings during 1994.

3. The Ad Hoc Committee had before it the views submitted by Australia, China, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in pursuance of paragraphs 4 and 5 of General Assembly resolution 48/82 (A/49/203 and Add.1 and Corr.1).

4. The following 16 delegations made statements in the general discussion under agenda item 4: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

5. The Ad Hoc Committee is composed of the following States:

(a) 44 members:

Australia
Bangladesh
Bulgaria
Canada
China
Djibouti
Egypt
Ethiopia
Germany
Greece
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Iraq
Italy
Japan
Kenya
Liberia
Madagascar
Malaysia
Maldives
Mauritius
Mozambique
Netherlands
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Panama
Poland
Romania
Russian Federation
Seychelles
Singapore
Somalia
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Thailand
Uganda
United Arab Emirates
United Republic of Tanzania
Yemen
Yugoslavia
Zambia
Zimbabwe

(b) Observers: Nepal, Sweden

6. The elected officers of the Ad Hoc Committee were the following:

Chairman: Mr. Stanley Kalpagé (Sri Lanka)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. John Griffin (Australia)
Mr. Pedro Comissario Afonso (Mozambique)
Mr. Mohammad Jusuf (Indonesia)

Rapporteur: Mr. Noël Rakotondramboa (Madagascar)

II. WORK OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE IN 1994

A. Agenda of the Ad Hoc Committee

7. At its 431st meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee adopted the following agenda (A/AC.159/L.120):

1. Opening of the session.

2. Election of Vice-Chairpersons.

3. Adoption of the agenda.

4. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 48/82 of 16 December 1993:

   General discussion;

   Further consideration of new alternative approaches;

   Future role of the Ad Hoc Committee.

5. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

6. Other matters.

B. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 48/82

8. During seven formal meetings, from 11 to 15 July (431st to 437th meetings), and in seven informal meetings, the Ad Hoc Committee considered General Assembly resolution 48/82 and its implementation.

9. Possible new alternative approaches and suggestions proposed by members of the Ad Hoc Committee at its 1994 session, with a view to reaching early agreement to give new impetus to the process of strengthening cooperation and ensuring peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region, were noted after preliminary discussion (see the annex to the present report).

C. Introduction and adoption of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session

10. At its 437th meeting, on 15 July, the Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee introduced the draft report of the Committee (A/AC.159/L.121).

11. At the same meeting the Ad Hoc Committee considered and adopted the draft report to the General Assembly (A/AC.159/L.121) as orally amended.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

12. The Ad Hoc Committee held wide-ranging discussions in terms of General Assembly resolution 48/82. The Ad Hoc Committee reaffirmed the commitment to the realization of the goals of peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region leading to the creation of a zone of peace. Further consideration was given to new alternative approaches with a view to reaching early agreement to give new impetus to the process of strengthening cooperation and ensuring peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region. The Committee proceeded on the conclusions and recommendations of its 1993 session, 2/ taking into account the views of Member States communicated to the Secretary-General and statements made in the Committee.

13. The Committee reiterated the conclusions and recommendations it had reached during its 1993 session and emphasized the need to continue its elaboration of new alternative approaches. It was agreed that while new alternative approaches were being considered and developed, it was important to build on areas on which consensus had already been reached in the Committee.

14. The climate of confidence, trust and cooperation noted during the 1993 session had been further enhanced by significant new developments of a positive nature in the region, such as the establishment of the democratic, non-racial Government of National Unity of South Africa and encouraging developments in the Middle East.

15. The Committee noted that the expected entry into force in November 1994 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea would enhance the prospects for mutually accommodative measures of cooperation on a regional as well as global basis, including the full exercise of the freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean.

16. The Ad Hoc Committee should encourage measures of cooperation in both military and non-military aspects of security, keeping in view various perceptions with regard to the region.

17. The Committee reiterated its conviction that the participation of all permanent members of the Security Council as well as major maritime users in the Ad Hoc Committee was important and would greatly facilitate the development of a mutually beneficial dialogue to advance peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region. It was essential to pursue such a dialogue and subsequent participation given the current international climate and the fact that the Committee was currently working on new alternative approaches. The Committee called for their participation in its work.

18. The Ad Hoc Committee accordingly requested the Chairman to apprise the Governments of the permanent members of the Security Council concerned and the major maritime users of the Committee's work and to consult them with a view to encouraging their renewed participation in and cooperation with the Committee.

19. The Committee considered that confidence-building measures at different regional levels, building incrementally on cooperation among various regional and other partners, as appropriate, on specific issues, made an important contribution to the attainment of the goals of peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region and that they should be further pursued.

20. The Committee recognised the value of ongoing naval cooperation in the Indian Ocean and encouraged consultations thereon among the countries concerned.

21. The Ad Hoc Committee recalled the general recognition of the need to pursue both global and regional efforts in a complementary way, bearing in mind that the States of the region could provide their own constructive contribution to the strengthening of peace, security, stability and cooperation in the Indian Ocean region.

22. The Committee discussed proposals concerning the desirability of holding, as appropriate, seminars, workshops or meetings of experts as a means of developing new ideas and fostering the habit of dialogue in the Indian Ocean region. In this connection, it was agreed that any such initiative should not detract from the importance of the Ad Hoc Committee or diffuse the focus of its mandate.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 29 (A/48/29).

2/ Ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 29 (A/47/29), chap. III.

ANNEX

Possible new alternative approaches proposed by members of the Ad Hoc Committee at its 1994 session

Possible new alternative approaches and suggestions proposed by members of the Ad Hoc Committee at its 1994 session, with a view to reaching early agreement to give new impetus to the process of strengthening cooperation and ensuring peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region, were the following:

- The Ad Hoc Committee should consider the broad concept of the Indian Ocean community.

- The Ad Hoc Committee should function as a forum in which the littoral and hinterland States, the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users could discuss their security interests and concerns as well as issues of international significance relating to the region.

- The Ad Hoc Committee could serve as a forum for considering and exploring confidence-building measures initiated by the States concerned, e.g. a treaty on amity and cooperation, non-aggression pacts, etc.

- The Ad Hoc Committee should also consider non-military aspects of security in the Indian Ocean.

- The Ad Hoc Committee should encourage measures for cooperation in economic, scientific, technical, environmental and humanitarian fields which could contribute to regional peace and security and encourage, where appropriate, regional economic initiatives.

- The Ad Hoc Committee should encourage naval cooperation among the littoral and hinterland States and other States pursuing peaceful interests in the region.

- A meeting of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean region should be held as it would contribute to the promotion of peace, security and stability in the region.

- The Ad Hoc Committee should commence work on a new Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace which strikes a realistic balance between the interests and concerns, rights and responsibilities of regional as well as extra-regional States.

- The Ad Hoc Committee should encourage cooperative efforts to monitor and limit the problem of the illegal tranfer of arms affecting the security and territorial integrity of the States in the region, as well as related problems of drugs and piracy.

- The Ad Hoc Committee should promote cooperative strategies based on transparency and trust-building in the Indian Ocean region through, inter alia, use of the United Nations arms transfer register or similar future regional arrangements and adherence to existing disarmament and arms control treaties and conventions.

- The Ad Hoc Committee should develop a programme of work based on a step by step progress towards regional and global measures aimed at fostering habits of dialogue to ensure peace, security, stability and cooperation in the Indian Ocean region.

- The Ad Hoc Committee could request the General Assembly to establish an expert group which could develop and elaborate new alternative approaches for consideration by the Ad Hoc Committee.

- The Ad Hoc Committee should consider preventive diplomacy mechanisms, including establisment of risk reduction centres, early warning, information gathering and exchange methods and the utilization of preventive diplomacy workshops.

- The Ad Hoc Committee should encourage the holding of workshops or seminars which would encompass a cross-section of people in their personal capacities and serve as a means to discuss options for regional cooperation in the Indian Ocean region.

- The Ad Hoc Committee should support the retreat in recent times from nuclear confrontation and build-up of nuclear weapons by encouraging the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles, enhanced conventional weapons, as well as the reduction of armed forces to the level of defence sufficiency. The maintenance of reasonable ratios among the naval and military forces would also be desirable.

- The Ad Hoc Committee should address the security threats emanating from within the area. In this regard, there is a need for a commitment by the States of the region to the settlement of disputes and conflicts through peaceful means, which would help to achieve peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region.

- In its efforts towards attaining the goals of peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region leading to the creation of a zone of peace, the search for new alternative approaches should be within the framework of the Ad Hoc Committee and with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users.